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'MORE LIGHT.'

FROM the cradle to the grave, the supreme object of man's exertion is, or ought to be, 'More Light.' The daintily reared infant coos in its laced *berceau* at the gleam of a rose-tinted lamp. The workhouse child hushes its wailing in ecstatic contemplation of a flaring gas jet. The aged pauper, staring at the dull unchanging stone, craves, like the dying philosopher, for 'more light.' Each is most pathetically unconscious that the darkness is within as well as without; yet to each is light, life; darkness, death. Through all the changing scenes of life—from the ethical researches of the philosopher and the investigations of the scientist, down by infinite degrees to the credulous inquirers into futurity by cards and gypsies—all are seeking 'more light.' Man, it has been said, dreads death as a child dreads the dark; and for the same reason—ignorance of what it hides. To enter a dark, unknown room is puzzling to the brave and experienced; to childhood, it is appalling, simply, for it is peopled to the full with imaginary possibilities and horrors—possibilities and terrors, which, for thousands of years, have peopled the hours of darkness with ghosts and spectres—hallucinations, which even those who see do not believe in; any more than Hamlet believed that he had been visited by one from that bourn from whence, as he himself said, 'no traveller returns.' No; though one and all are bound for that new and unexplored country, to whose borders friendly hands and fond words have accompanied us, there comes a moment when fond words are unheard, friendly hands unfelt, and the unclothed spirit departs alone to the place appointed. But what that place may be like, or what are the powers, privileges, or deprivations of the new estate, not one scintilla 'with lessening ray' has pierced the darkness that shrouds the mystery of Death to enlighten us; no more than if a single ghost-story had never been narrated. If

there be, as we believe, 'no darkness but ignorance,' then, in the matter of death, the ignorance and the darkness are co-equal. Even to the imagination it is painful to think of leaving 'the warm precincts of the cheerful day'; for, to be cheered by light and depressed by darkness are alternations only unrealised by those who have been blind from their birth.

But while darkness may be irksome or terrifying, even light, if unalloyed, is capable of destroying instead of aiding vision—of producing discomfort instead of delight. The fierce glare of publicity is utterly repugnant to shrinking, timid souls, whose happiness lies in keeping themselves and their concerns in decent obscurity. They may not precisely prefer darkness; but they can see to make up their minds by the light of brighter intellects than their own, and will even prefer to live in the shadow cast by another man's lofty reasoning, than go to the trouble and expense of lighting their own private candle of common sense. The saying that neither the Sun nor Death can be looked at steadily, is only true for such as will not use a piece of smoked glass, or habituate themselves to the contemplation of a mortal putting on immortality. If these devices be practised, the desire for more light and the ability to support it will grow together. Even the various metaphorical phrases in daily use demonstrate how admirable and desirable is more light. To get a side-light on a dark page of history, to hear a master of the art throwing a light on a difficult subject, is equivalent to finding sunshine in a shady place, or to watching the 'netted sunbeams' dance for our delight. How a man's face lights up if he be pleased; and when a whole nation rejoices, its ordinary method of showing its elation is by having an illumination. As early as the eighth century, books and missals adorned with colours and gilding were said to be illuminated. And France, Germany, Spain, and Belgium, have all, at various periods,

rejoiced in Societies of learned or quasi-learned men who styled themselves 'Illuminati.'

Thus it would seem that in all ages—from Homer's shepherd downward—men have agreed in blessing the useful light, whether it be that of sun or moon, or the light of knowledge, or the serener ray of an untroubled conscience—shedding its mild light over poverty and disease, age and loneliness. To have light is to have life and something more than mere vitality. As a plant placed in the sunshine thrives and puts forth its best of leaf and blossom, so a soul that is enlightened expands day by day, and yields pure thoughts, good deeds, puts on that beautiful behaviour which is the very perfume and offspring of 'light.' So conscious are all of the advantages of light, real and metaphorical, that but to intimate that 'more light' is required for any course of action, argues a certain amount already in the possession of the seeker. Any one who cannot 'see his way' to this or that proceeding—to taking a share in a new company, to granting a favour, to acceding to a request, to lending money, to apologising, to eating humble-pie—has only to state that he is waiting for 'more light' to be justified in his own and others' opinion for the delay. So praiseworthy a desire of course covers many spurious or at least doubtful, as well as earnest and honest, aspirants with its decorous mantle. As when, not long since, the son of an acquaintance who had received a 'call' to a larger congregation, replied to our question if his father were going to accept it: 'Well, father's praying for more light; but,' added the youth, with an ingenuously knowing look—"but nearly all the furniture's packed!"

That science has in recent years shed abundant light on paths leading to the material comfort and well-being of mankind, we all gratefully acknowledge. Our homes are brighter and healthier, our friends are brought nearer to us, age and disease are being fought with a vigour that is the admiration even of the unscientific; and if the plague-spot of poverty remain, it is neither despised nor ignored. If this were all, it were well. But among the many inventions sought out by man, it is not merely the beneficent that boasts disciples and devotees. Hundreds of human beings are spending their lives in devising means of destroying in the quickest and most wholesale manner—life. And how many are sacrificed yearly to the incidents and accidents attendant on experiments made with engines of destruction? More than this, the invention is no sooner what is called 'perfected,' than it is pirated, and turned by ignorant hands against a fancied or real enemy. No matter that the innocent die an agonised death, with or in place of the offender; here is the fiendish invention to hand, and opportunity and recklessness combine to use it. And more light results in greater darkness—at least for a time.

Again, the vessel, designed, doubtless, to protect the friend no less than to overawe or destroy the enemy; the structure armed cap-a-pied, and filled with well-instructed ardent souls; full of the light of scientific

inventions also, makes trial of herself, and encounters—not the human enemy against whom she was so fully armoured, so impregnably furnished, but precisely that that had been overlooked in her enlightened construction—a rough-and-tumble game with the winds and waves. Did souls perish, how fearful would have been the resulting loss! How grievous the sacrifice, not made to virtue or to justice, to patriotism or to nobleness, but to a mistake! a misapprehension of the power of nature and the caprices of a storm!

It is legitimate, while smarting under such and similar experiences, that we lament the apparent decadence of national aims and ideals. To be wise, noble, just, and free, is to have an ideal of goodness that is immortal; to be strong, smart, bright, highly accomplished in the art of destruction, to be powerful in wiping out men and cities, in putting back the hand of the clock of civilisation a century or two, is to possess an aim and an ideal as mortal as the rivalry and emulation of which it is composed. Vaulting ambition o'erleaps itself, when the aim of a nation is to be the first in power, instead of first in right of the justness and nobility of its intentions and actions. The same flaw runs through all the phases of existence. To grasp at power, place, station, at wealth and dignities, instead of seeking after goodness, truth, honour, after integrity and dignity, is to substitute a lower ideal in the place of a higher and simpler one. More light should enlighten, not dazzle and blind. Even in architecture, in the every-day building of every-day houses, what a huge mistake are the enormous plate-glass windows which have replaced the diamond-paned casements of our wiser ancestors. True, the former admit 'more light'; but in a climate of which four or five months are characterised by cold winds and low temperature, it is not merely 'more light' that is admitted through those huge sheets of glass; cold is allowed to enter with 'more light'—just as in some instances the chill of scepticism makes its way into the broadly lighted halls of knowledge, made 'dark with excess of bright.'

Yet so convinced are human beings of the power of knowledge, that their familiar proverb attributes potential sovereignty to the devil himself provided he can tell the unknowable—the unknowable, that is, to them. Doubtless, the greatest goad to the search after nature's secrets is this same restless curiosity, which continually demands, and here and there obtains, 'more light' on the process called cosmic. Thronging the two great highways that lead to knowledge—the scientific highway, that examines nature, and the ethical highway, that does justice and loves mercy and walks humbly—thronging these two broad roads, and mixing with the crowd of anxious, earnest seekers, are the wild herd of rash, inconstant ones, who madly assail every 'no thoroughfare' and furze-barred gate, who, because their desire is for 'more light,' because their intentions are good, imagine they have got the 'open sesame' of both science and virtue; and who, when thorn-pricked and bleeding, retire, wailing loudly, from the contest. Or else, victims to some

marsh-light of their own imagining, they shout ignorant triumph at what a few hours of patient investigation would have proved, even to themselves, to be a phosphorescent failure. Nothing short of a life-long devotion to science on the one hand, or an equally life-long continuance in well-doing on the other, entitles or obtains for a human being the 'more light' for which it is at once his privilege, his burden, and his glory to crave.

AT MARKET VALUE.*

CHAPTER XVII.—THE HEART OF THE DECOY DUCK.

It was about those same days that the brand-new Lord Axminster, strolling down the Row one afternoon arm in arm with his impecunious friend Captain Bourchier, nodded a little familiarly to a very pretty girl on a neat chestnut mare, accompanied by a groom of the starchiest respectability. Lord Axminster's salute was too easy-going, indeed, to be described as a bow ; it resembled rather the half-playful bob with which one touches one's hat to some man acquaintance. But the pretty girl considered a recognition, no matter how scanty, from a man in Lord Axminster's position, too important a matter to be casually thrown away ; and reining in her mount, she drew near to the rails, and exclaimed in a saucy yet sleepy voice : 'Well, how goes it this morning ?'

'Oh, all right,' Lord Axminster answered in a nonchalant tone. 'Are you going to the Graham Pringles' hop this evening ?'

'I don't think so,' the pretty girl responded with a careless smile. 'Too hot, you know, for dancing.' Which was a graceful way of covering the unacknowledged truth that she had not in point of fact received an invitation.

Lord Axminster asked a few more of the usual useless society questions, and then stifled a yawn. The pretty girl stroked her mare's glossy neck, and with an easy nod went on her way again, rejoicing in the consciousness that she had attracted the attention of the loungers by the rails as the acquaintance of a genuine nobleman. As soon as she had gone, Captain Bourchier turned to his friend. 'I say, Axminster,' he observed with a tinge of querulousness in his voice, 'you *might* have introduced me. I call it beastly mean of a man to keep all his good things to himself like that. Who is the young woman ? She's confoundedly good-looking.'

'Yes, she *is* a nice little thing,' Axminster admitted, half grudgingly. 'Nothing in her, of course, and a kind of sleepy Venus ; but distinctly nice-looking, if you care for them that way. A trifle vulgar, though ; and more than a trifle silly. But she's good enough for a trip up the river, don't you know ? The sort of girl one can endure from eighteen to eight-and-twenty.'

'Who is she ?' Captain Bourchier asked, looking after her with obvious interest.

'Who is she ? Ah, there you come to the point. Well, that's just it ; who is she ? Why, Spider Clarke's daughter. You've heard of her ; the Decoy Duck.'

Captain Bourchier pursed his lips. The news evidently interested him. 'So that's the Decoy Duck !' he repeated slowly with a broadening smile. 'So that's Spider Clarke's Decoy Duck ! Well, I don't wonder she serves her purpose. She's as personable a girl as I've seen for a twelvemonth.'

'She *is* pretty,' Lord Axminster admitted in the same grudging fashion.

'Any brothers ?' Captain Bourchier asked, as though the question were one of not the slightest importance.

Lord Axminster smiled. 'Ah, there you go straight to the point,' he answered, 'like a good man of business ! That's just it ; no brothers. She's the only child of her father, and he's a money-lender.—I admire you, Bourchier, for the frank and straightforward way you put your finger on the core of whatever subject you deal with. No beating about the bush or unnecessary sentimentality about *you*, dear boy ! She *has* no brothers ; she represents the entire reversionary interest, at fourteen per cent, in old Spider Clarke's money.'

Captain Bourchier assumed at once an apologetic air. 'Well, you see,' he said candidly, 'if one's looking out for tin, it's such a great point to find the tin combined with a young woman who isn't wholly and entirely distasteful to one. I don't go in for sentiment, as you justly observe ; but hang it all, I don't want to go and fling myself away upon the very first young woman that ever turns up with a few thousands to her name, irrespective of the question whether she's one-eyed or hump-backed, a woolly-haired nigger or a candidate for a lunatic asylum. Now, this girl's good-looking ; she's straight and well made ; and I suppose she has the oof ; so, if one's going to give up one's freedom for a woman at all, I should say the Decoy Duck was well worth inquiring about.'

'Very possibly,' Lord Axminster replied, as one who dismisses an uninteresting subject.

'Well, has she the dibs ? That's the question,' Captain Bourchier continued, returning to the charge undismayed, as becomes a cavalry officer.

'Spider Clarke is rich, I suppose,' Lord Axminster answered with a little irritability. 'He ought to be, I know. He's had enough out of *me*, anyhow. I'm one of his flies. He did all those bills for me, before anybody believed my cousin Bertie was really dead ; and as it was very speculative business, of course he did them at a heavy discount. He feathered his nest from me. His kites must have swallowed up five years at least of the Membury rent-roll, I should think, before he was "through with it," as that American girl says. I know he's left me pretty well cleaned out. And Florrie will have it all, I suppose. The girl's name is Florrie.'

'Do you think Lady Axminster would ask me to meet her ?' Captain Bourchier inquired tentatively.

The new peer raised his eyebrows. 'I'm sure I don't know,' he replied with a doubtful air, like one who could hardly answer for Lady Axminster's conduct. 'They're not exactly the sort of people my wife cares to ask—not even before we'd got things set straight with them financially. Her acquaintance with Miss Florrie and Miss Florrie's Mamma was always of the most formal and perfunctory description. Besides, if you want to know the girl, there's no need to approach her as if she were a Duchess. It's easy enough for anybody with a stiver to his name to pick up Florrie Clarke's acquaintance.'

'Oh yes, of course; I can see that for myself,' Captain Bourchier went on with the same cynical candour. 'It's plain enough to any one she's the sort of young lady who's directly approachable from all quarters. But that's not what I want, don't you see? I want to be introduced to her, fair and square, in the society way, and to judge for myself whether or not she'll do for me. If she does do, then I shall have put things from the first upon a proper basis, so that her father and mother will understand at once in what spirit I approach her. Hang it all, you know, Axminster, when a man thinks it's on the cards he may possibly marry a girl, why, respect for the lady who may in the end become his wife makes him desire to conduct all his relations with her from the beginning decently and in order.'

Lord Axminster's lips curled. 'I appreciate the delicacy of your feelings, my dear boy,' he answered, with a faint touch of irony; 'and if Ethel doesn't mind, you shall meet the girl at dinner.'

It was a proud evening indeed for Mrs Clarke and Florrie when first they dined at Lady Axminster's. To be sure, their hostess put up her tortoise-shell eye-glasses more than once during the course of the dinner, and surveyed the money-lender's wife through them with a good long stony British stare, for all the world as if she were a specimen of some rare new genus, just introduced from Central Africa into the Zoological Gardens of English society. But Mrs Clarke, who was too stout to notice these little things, lived on through the stares in the complacent satisfaction of the diamonds that glittered on her own expansive neck; while as for Florrie, with her short black hair even more frizzed and fluffy than ever, she was too deeply taken up with that charming Captain Bourchier to notice what was happening between her Mamma and their hostess. Captain Bourchier, she felt, was quite the right sort of man: a perfect gentleman. He was older than Reggie Hesslegrave, of course, but very nearly as good-looking; and then, he was well connected, and held such delightfully cynical views of life—in fact, disbelieved in everybody and everything, which, as all the world knows, is so extremely high-toned. Miss Florrie was delighted with him. He wasn't rich, to be sure; that Papa and Mamma had heard; but he was the son of an Honourable, and the first-cousin of a peer, not to mention remote chances of succeeding through his mother to a baronetcy in abeyance. Florrie felt at once this was a very different case from poor dear Reggie Hesslegrave's; and

when at the end of the evening Captain Bourchier gave her hand the most delicately chivalrous pressure imaginable, and trusted Mrs Clarke would allow him to call some day soon at Rutland Gate, Florrie realised on the spot this was genuine business, and responded with a maiden blush of the purest water. That dainty little baby face was always equal to such an emergency; for Miss Florrie had the manners of the most shrinking *ingénue*, with the mind and soul which might reasonably be expected of Spider Clarke's daughter.

And yet not wholly so, as things turned out in the end; for, after Captain Bourchier had called once or twice at Rutland Gate, and had duly poured into Miss Florrie's ears his tale of artless love, and been officially accepted by Miss Florrie's Papa and Mamma as the prospective inheritor of Miss Florrie's thousands—a strange thing came to pass in the inmost recesses of Miss Florrie's heart; a thing that Miss Florrie herself could never possibly have counted upon. For when she came to tell Reggie Hesslegrave that she had received a most eligible offer from a Captain in a cavalry regiment, and had accepted it with the advice and consent of her parents, poor Reggie's face grew so pale and downcast that Florrie fairly pitied him. And then, with a flash of surprise, the solemn discovery burst in upon her—in spite of Papa and Mamma, and the principles they had instilled, she and Reggie Hesslegrave were actually in love with one another.

It was true, quite true; so far as those two young people were capable of loving, they were actually in love with one another. The human heart, that very incalculable factor in the problem of life, had taken its revenge at last on Miss Florrie. She had been brought up to believe the heart was a thing to be lightly stifted in the interests of the highest bidder, social or mercantile; and now that she had accepted a most eligible bid, all things considered, she woke up all at once to sudden consciousness of the fact that her heart, her heart too, had a word to say in this matter. What she had mistaken for the merest passing flirtation with Reggie Hesslegrave, was in reality a vast deal more deep and serious than what she had been taught to regard as the grave business of life with Captain Bourchier. She had feelings a little profounder and more genuine than she suspected. The soul within her was not quite so dead as her careful upbringing had led her to believe it.

In point of fact, when real tears rose spontaneous, at the announcement, in Reggie Hesslegrave's eyes, real tears rose to meet them in Miss Florrie's in turn. They were both astonished to find how much each thought of the other.

Not that Florrie had the faintest intention—just as yet—of throwing overboard her eligible cavalry officer. That would be the purest Quixotism. But she recognised at the same time that the cavalry officer was business, society, convention; while Reggie Hesslegrave was now romance—a perilous delight she had never till that moment dreamed of. As romance she accepted him, therefore, and much romance she got out of him; risky romance of

a sort that stirred in poor Florrie's sleepy, sluggish heart a strange throbbing and beating never before suspected. She was engaged to Captain Bourchier, of course, and she meant to marry him ; one doesn't throw overboard such a chance as that of placing one's self at once in the very thick of good society. But week after week, and month after month, while she met Captain Bourchier from time to time at dance or racecourse, she still went on writing in private most passionately despairing letters to Reggie Hesslegrave whom she could never marry. As she put it herself, she was dead stuck on Reggie. Week after week, and month after month, she made stolen opportunities for meeting him, unawares, as it seemed, by Hyde Park Corner, or saying a few hurried words to him as she passed in Piccadilly. Then the interviews between them grew bolder and bolder ; Florrie pencilled a few hasty lines, 'Will be at the Academy with Mamma to-morrow at ten ; meet me, if you can, in the Architectural Drawings ; it's always empty. I'll leave Mamma in one of the other rooms ; she doesn't care to go round and look at all the pictures.' And these fleeting moments grew dearer and ever dearer to Florrie Clarke's mind ; they came as a revelation to her of a new force in her bosom ; till she got engaged to Captain Bourchier, she had never herself suspected what profound capacity for a simple sort of every-day romance existed within her.

Moreover, 'tis a peculiarity of the thing we call love that it gets out of every man and every woman the very best that is in them. Reggie Hesslegrave began to feel himself in his relation to Florrie quite other than he had ever felt himself in any other relation of his poor wasted existence. He loved that girl, with a love that, for him, was very nearly unselfish. He thought of her and he dreamt of her. He lived day and night for her. He risked Kathleen's money recklessly for her sake on impossible outsiders, and backed the favourite at race after race, in utter disregard of worldly circumstances, in order to win her a princely income. That was about the highest point Reggie's industry, affection, and unselfishness could reach ; in his way, he was raised above his own normal level ; for Florrie he would almost have consented to wear an unfashionable coat, or to turn down his trousers when Bond Street turned them up, or to do anything, in fact, that a woman could wish—except curb his expenditure and lay by for the future.

So, for about eighteen months, things went on in this way ; and then, flying rumours began to flit about town that Spider Clarke of late had not been doing quite so well in his money-lending as usual. His star was waning. It was whispered at the clubs that, emboldened by his success with Algy Redburn, whom he was known to have financed during the tedious course of the Axminster peerage case, he had launched out too freely into similar speculations elsewhere, and had burnt his fingers over the monetary affairs of a very high personage. With bated breath, people mentioned his Serene Highness the Duke of Saxe-Weissnichtwo. Whether this was so or not, it is certain at least that Spider Clarke was less in repute in

St James's than formerly ; the ladies who returned Mrs Clarke's bows so coldly at the theatre, returned them now with the very faintest of possible inclinations, or affected to be turning their opera glasses in the opposite direction, and not to notice her. Even Captain Bourchier himself, whose suit had been pressed hard and warm at first, began to fancy it was a precious good thing that innocent-looking little Decoy Duck had played so fast and loose with him ; for, as things were turning out now, he was confoundedly inclined to doubt whether the man who got her would get enough pickings with her to make it worth his while to give up that very mysterious entity he called his liberty. Henceforth, he was seen less and less often at Rutland Gate, and affected more and more at the Flamingo Club to speak of his relations with the Spiderette as a mere passing flirtation, that had never been meant to come to anything serious.

So matters went on till the end of the season. Meanwhile, the less Florrie saw of the accepted lover, the more and more did she see of the clandestine and romantic one. As for Reggie, he began to plan out a mighty scheme for winning himself fortune at a single stroke—a heroic investment of every penny he could raise, by pledging his slender credit, on a famous tip for the coming Cesarewitch. He intended to be rich, and to cut out that beastly Bourchier man, and to make himself a swell, and to marry Florrie. On the very afternoon when the news of his fortune was to reach London by telegram, however, he received a despatch at his office in the City which considerably disquieted him. Just at the first blush, to be sure, he thought it must be meant to announce the triumph of Canterbury Bell, whom he had 'backed for his pile' ; but when he opened it, what he read was simply this : 'Come round to-night to see me ; ask for me at the hall door ; important news ; must speak with you.—FLORRIE.'

Mr Reginald wondered much what this message could portend. He determined to go round to Rutland Gate at the earliest possible moment, as soon as he had satisfied himself that Canterbury Bell had behaved as he had a right to expect of such a filly, and that he was indeed the possessor of a marrying competence.

THE AUSTRALIAN MEAT-TRADE.

A REMARKABLE statement appeared among the Australian telegrams in the daily newspapers a few months ago. It was to the effect that during the year 1892 the number of sheep in New South Wales had decreased by three and a quarter millions as compared with the previous year. This decrease was ascribed, not to drought, which has so often committed havoc among the Australian flocks and herds, but to the increased demands of the boiling-down establishments and the growth of the frozen-meat trade. Whether or not cause and effect were correctly represented, the statement was sufficiently noteworthy, and is worth following up.

The exportation of frozen meat from Australia has only attained large dimensions within the last few years; but it dates back to about 1880, prior to which year Australian beef and mutton reached us only in tins. But since the invention of mechanical refrigerators, and the fitting-up of steamers specially for the conveyance of fresh meat—in a state of what one may call suspended animation—from the Antipodes to Europe, the business has become so enormous, that huge freezing establishments and several fleets of large steamers are kept constantly employed. The supply has created a demand in the English markets to such an extent that it has been found most profitable on the Australian runs to shear the sheep for three or four years, and then to kill them for export as frozen carcasses. In the third or fourth year, it is said, the maximum of quality and quantity of both wool and meat will be secured. So many run-owners have acted on this principle, that the flocks of New South Wales have been depleted as above mentioned; but this, of course, is a method of eating into capital—of killing the goose that lays the golden eggs—not to be commended as a permanent policy. If the frozen-meat trade is to continue one of the staple industries of Australia, the pastoral capital must be maintained.

About the beginning of 1893, a dinner was given by the Agent-general of Queensland in London, to celebrate the inauguration of a new development in the industry of that colony. Until quite recently, the exports to this country from Queensland of fresh meat were comparatively small; but as the colony possesses some twenty million sheep and some six million cattle, it was resolved to make a great effort to secure some of the purveying of the mother-country and dependencies. Thus, in 1893, depôts and freezing-stores were established at Gibraltar, Aden, Ceylon, Hong-kong, Singapore, and at other naval stations and ports of call, with the object of supplying fresh Australian meat to the garrisons and to British vessels. At the dinner given by Sir James Garrick, the Agent-general, in London, all the meat served was imported from Queensland.

The sheep-stock of Australia in 1889 numbered about 85 millions of sheep, which yielded about 340 million pounds of wool, realising in the English market something like 18 millions sterling. It is not easy to grasp these figures. Besides these 85 millions of sheep, there were no fewer than eight millions of cattle.

Yet Australia as a sheep-raiser is barely a hundred years old. When Captain Cook landed on 'Terra Incognita Australis,' whoever may have been before him, there was neither in Australia, in Tasmania, nor in New Zealand, any animal in the remotest degree related to the sheep. It is a curious fact that the greatest mutton and wool raising area in the world is the only pastoral area that has not had native sheep. In Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, there have been distinct breeds of wild sheep; but Australasia, upon which we now so much rely for food and wool, had to import the stock

from which the present immense flocks have descended. The first convict fleet that sailed for Botany Bay in 1787 called at the Cape of Good Hope for supplies, and there took on board some sheep, and these were the first to land on the Australian continent. That is just one hundred and seven years ago.

There came a time when wool ceased to pay, because the flock-masters were producing more than the home markets could absorb. It is said that the price fell as low as sevenpence-halfpenny per fleece on the run, and that sheep were sold by the thousand at a shilling a head. This was in 'the forties,' before the gold discoveries, and stock-holders were on the verge of ruin—many of them indeed were actually cleaned out—when a Sydney gentleman suggested that sheep might be slaughtered and boiled-down for their hides and tallow. Most of the large flock-masters acted on the hint, and thus Australian tallow appeared in the market, bringing some twenty-five pounds per ton in the colony, though fetching some forty pounds per ton, after payment of freight and duty, in London.

About 1862, a trade was begun in salted mutton, which those who engaged in it found profitable; but the market for it was necessarily limited, being for the most part confined to the shipping. A few years later, a hint was taken from America, and 'canning' was commenced. But soon after mechanical refrigeration began to be adopted on the Transatlantic steamers for the transport of fresh meat, a new vista opened before the colonies. The credit for the new method belongs, we believe, to the late Mr J. J. Coleman, the inventor of the Bell-Coleman Refrigerator, first adopted by the American steamers for meat-cargoes.

When the mechanical process had been thoroughly tested on the Atlantic, it only required the fitting-up of steamers on the Australian and New Zealand lines, with the requisite machinery for the longer voyage through the tropics, to bring the colonies into direct relations with the London meat-market.

New Zealand was the first of the colonies to go extensively into this business—perhaps because the New Zealand sheep are fatter and more fit for the butcher than the Australian—and by the year 1889 was already exporting frozen meat to the value of £780,000. There are now some twenty-two freezing-works in New Zealand alone, capable of freezing about four millions of sheep per annum; and in Australia, some seventeen establishments, capable of freezing about three millions annually.

The business is now almost entirely in the hands of highly organised companies, some of which have also their own steamers for direct transport of the meat from the colonial ports. A refrigerating work capable of treating and holding ready for shipment one thousand sheep a day costs about twenty thousand pounds, so that a large capital is locked up long before the shipment begins. The farmer receives about twopence per pound for sheep in good condition, not over seventy pounds in weight, receiving back the skins and fat. The cost of slaughtering, freezing, &c., preparatory to shipment, and putting on board the homeward steamers, is rather less than one halfpenny per pound. The

freight and other charges amount to three-half-pence more; and the total prime cost of Australian and New Zealand mutton landed in London is thus about fourpence per pound.

Unfortunately, a large proportion of it is sold—as the recent Report of the House of Lords' Committee on Foreign Meat shows—as Scotch and English mutton, and the consumer has not as yet obtained the full benefit of these bountiful supplies from the Antipodes. No doubt, the large imports have had the effect of cheapening home-grown meat; and the above-mentioned Report says that the best New Zealand mutton is quite equal to the best British mutton.

When the steamers arrive in London, they discharge the contents of their 'cold chambers'—storage-spaces in which the temperature is kept uniformly just above freezing-point all through the voyage—into barges in waiting. These barges then proceed alongside one of the new meat warehouses, which are among the most wonderful of recent developments in the river-side enterprises of London. There the carcasses are not taken in at the front-door, so to speak, but are sent by outside elevators up to the roof—the reason being that, as warm air rises and cold air sinks, it is desirable to have the freezing chambers at the bottom, and the doors at the top, of the building. On the top-most flat, the carcasses, as they are received in their winding-sheets, are sorted according to their brands and qualities, and quickly despatched to the storeroom to which their quality entitles them. As expedition is necessary to prevent injury to the meat, everything is arranged to take in and store as quickly as the largest ocean-liner can deliver by day and night.

In the freezing chambers the carcasses are piled in long, high rows in a temperature kept uniformly at twenty degrees Fahrenheit. This temperature is provided by means of a series of pipes, running the whole length and across the chamber, through which is driven, by powerful machinery, compressed ammonia, which passing through minute apertures in the pipes, suddenly expands, and produces the cold current required. To keep the cold current in circulation, ventilators are employed, and men have to be constantly on the watch to see that the pipes do not become clogged with hoar-frost.

In these chambers the meat can be preserved for an apparently indefinite time without injury to the fibre and flavour. Certain it is that storage for upwards of twelve months, after the passage from Australia, has found it as good as ever when thawed. When required for market, the carcasses are sent up to the top flat again, and from there sent down by outside lifts to the waiting vans and trucks. The delivery usually begins at midnight, to be in time for the early Smithfield market; and tens of thousands of carcasses are every week thus sent in and out of these cold stores.

The machinery required for all this is very elaborate; and to show the extent to which the trade has now grown, we may mention that in 1893, 2,514,541 carcasses of sheep and 171,640 quarters of beef, were received from Australia and New Zealand; besides which there were 1,373,723 carcasses of sheep from South America.

The chilled meat from the United States and Canada comes mainly into Glasgow and Liverpool; and the imports last year came up to about 80,000 tons. This was beef, in competition with which the colonies have not yet made large progress, although Queensland is making vigorous efforts.

To show the extent of the entire chilled and frozen beef-trade we append the imports for 1893: Fresh Beef—from Australia, 225,000 cwt.; New Zealand, 15,000 cwt.; River Plate, 37,000 cwt.; United States, 1,470,000 cwt.; Canada, 100 cwt.; other countries, 52,900 cwt. Total, 1,800,000 cwt., or 90,000 tons. Queensland as yet has appliances for treating only about one-fifth of such a quantity, and some mistake was made in the earlier shipments, which rather prejudiced people against the colonial beef. But the cargoes sent forward in the later part of last year were found of such excellent quality that the demand grew rapidly, and Queensland frozen beef has now, to use an Americanism, 'come to stay.'

It is mutton, however, to which Australia and New Zealand pin their reputation; and the extent of their shipments may be seen in the following list of imports at London and Liverpool last year: Fresh Mutton—from Australia, 605,692 carcasses; New Zealand, 1,893,601 do.; Falkland Islands, 16,425 do.; River Plate—at London, 109,808 do.; at Liverpool, 1,263,915 do. Total, 3,889,444 carcasses. Australia and New Zealand together have thus very nearly three-fourths of the trade in frozen mutton, and their share will doubtless go on increasing. But this does not represent all the business of the colonies, for large quantities of meat are now being shipped direct to Continental ports and to British coaling-stations and ports of call abroad.

It is almost astounding the rapidity with which this fresh-meat trade has developed—all within about twelve years. In 1880, for instance, only four hundred carcasses of fresh mutton were imported into this country from Australia, and none at all from the River Plate. Year by year the quantity has gone on increasing; and on summing up the annual totals, we find that the carcasses of no fewer than 22,073,144 sheep and lambs have been imported into this country, and sold as fresh meat, since 1880 and up to the end of 1893. Of that enormous quantity, 2,253,093 came from Australia, and 11,324,879 from New Zealand.

It is almost impossible to measure the value of this boon to the mass of the population; while it is probable that but for this new trade in meat, Australian and New Zealand sheep-farmers would have been completely ruined under the low prices which have prevailed for wool. It is estimated that the meat consumption of the United Kingdom amounts to 2,122,000 tons per annum; and of that quantity, quite one-third is now imported. This is not only a large proportion in itself, but is important in view of the fact that the home production of beef and mutton does not increase so rapidly as the population; and that the foreign supplies are capable of almost indefinite extension. It is practically only a question of storage and carriage; and as for carriage,

there are now eighty-eight full-powered steamers fitted with refrigerating machinery, with an aggregate carrying capacity of 6,700,000 carcasses per annum, or nearly twice as many as were imported last year. Of these vessels, sixty-seven are engaged in the Australian and New Zealand trade with London, and twenty-one in the River Plate trade with Liverpool and London.

The Australian mutton has not hitherto been ranked so high in the home markets as the New Zealand, but has competed more with Argentine mutton in point of quality. But as experience has been gained in the trade, stock-raisers and shippers are learning what is most wanted here, and in the quality of the meat and size of the carcasses are coming nearer and nearer to British prejudices. So far, lambs have come mostly from New Zealand, the Australian shipments of lambs last year not having been very well selected. It is not generally known, perhaps, that fresh lamb can now be obtained out of the refrigerating stores all the year round, although the traditional respect for 'seasons' is still preserved.

As the agricultural returns for the United Kingdom show a material falling off in the number of cattle and sheep, the development of the dead-meat trade with Greater Britain is of direct importance to all of us. Of course we ought to have the benefit of the low cost, which, according to the Special Committee on Foreign Meat, is mostly swallowed up by the middlemen. That will doubtless be remedied when the whole business is more thoroughly regulated, as is proposed. But in the meantime it is interesting to know from this Committee that only experts (and not always they) can distinguish between home-grown and imported meat; that the home consumer does not suffer (except in pocket) if he is supplied with imported instead of home-grown; and that the average quality of imported meat is as high as the average quality of home-grown meat, while being more free from any suspicion of unhealthiness.

The Committee reported that the balance of evidence was in favour of the increase in popularity of imported meat as it becomes better known. 'While the Committee believe that it will be impossible to place before the consumer meat equal in quality to the best that can be grown in these islands, and that, consequently, such meat will continue to command the top price, they think that there is a large quantity of meat produced in Great Britain of less good quality, which is inferior to the beef imported from America and the mutton imported from New Zealand. The ultimate result, therefore, will be that the meat will come to be divided into four general classes, with considerable variation of price. First, the best home-grown meat; secondly, the best imported meat; thirdly, the second-class home-grown meat; and lastly, the inferior meat, both home-grown and imported.'

The Australasian colonies have gone through so many vicissitudes, and have especially been smitten so severely by financial storms during the past year, that all must rejoice in the establishment of a sound regular industry of such promise, such capacity for expansion, and of such interest and importance to the mother-

country. But care will be needed in the colonies to preserve the industry from all suspicion, and to cultivate the approval of the home consumer.

A PRINCE'S LOVE-STORY.

CHAPTER III.

THE Prince had not appeared for the fishing on Thursday; and Margaret, in spite of her admission to herself that it would be best that she should not see him again, was rather sad. In the gloaming, before dinner, she wandered a little way along the road to Ardnashiel Castle. Suddenly a man appeared from the gloomy pine-wood on her right, and stood before her. 'You will be Miss Herries-Hay—Miss Marget Herries-Hay—I'm thinking?' said he.

'Yes,' said she; 'that's my name.' 'I've something for ye frae ye ken wha,' said the man. With a grin, he handed her a letter, and turned and disappeared again in the wood.

The letter, thought Margaret, was of course from the Prince! She hastened back to the manse and to her room to read it. She looked at the superscription: she had never seen the Prince's handwriting before; she hesitated about opening it—a letter thus secretly conveyed to her!—to break the envelope flap seemed like committing herself to a dangerous course; and to read the protestations of love which she was certain it must contain seemed as if it must be an acceptance of the Prince as a lover. She thought she heard her sister coming, and she crammed the letter into her pocket. No one came; and she drew it out again and tore it open. It contained only a line or two: 'Meet me in the Summer-house at the entrance of the Castle Garden at eight o'clock of Friday evening. I have to say to you something very important.'

There was no signature; but Margaret could not doubt that the note came from the Prince. The dinner bell rang, and she put the note in her pocket and went down-stairs. When dinner was over, she asked herself whether she should tell her father of this latest incident. But she had said nothing yet to him of her moving interview with the Prince; perhaps there would be no need that she ever should, for the Prince might now only wish to disclaim any intention of making love to her, and in that case the whole matter had better be plunged in oblivion. Neither that night, therefore, nor the next day did she mention what had occurred.

After tea on Friday afternoon, the Herries-Hay family all set off to Ardnashiel Castle, the Colonel on horseback, and the ladies in the phaeton—and in something of a temper; for the Colonel had refused to let them stay to the supper and the dancing within doors, which were expected to follow the demonstration without. It was growing dusk as they passed the lodge where Mrs. Herries-Hay and her younger daughter had been entertained; but between the tall firs of the avenue it was almost dark. A considerable company had assembled in the

castle courtyard, and on the green-sward before it, to witness or to join in the dancing. There were gentlemen and ladies; there were friends of the house, and tenants and clansmen, the latter all in Highland dress. When the pipes played and the pipers strutted and the clansmen marched, bearing torches, the scene became lurid, impressive, and warlike; and such on-lookers as had not seen the like before—among them Mrs Herries-Hay—declared it reminded them of something they had read in 'Waverley' or the 'Legend of Montrose' or somewhere else in Scott's novels.

The Prince came and talked a little with the Herries-Hays after their first greeting, and Margaret blushed when he addressed her. She admired, while she wondered a little at, his apparent unconsciousness of the impending interview between them. He was still talking with the Herries-Hays when the white-headed gentleman whom Margaret had seen on Sunday morning at the kirk came and carried the Prince off to talk to some one else; and in a little while Margaret, furtively glancing at her watch, discovered it was upon half-past eight.

It was not difficult to slip out of the line of spectators into the darkness behind. Margaret found it quite easy; but when she was in the deep shade of the trees, she was at a loss; for though she had thought she would easily find the summer-house, at the entrance of the garden, she now was sure she could not. She was standing still a moment to consider which way she ought to turn, when a man in Highland dress appeared before her. 'You will be wanting the summer-house, Miss Herries-Hay,' said he—and his voice sounded familiar—"and I will just be here to take you there.'

Without question or demur, she committed herself to the guidance of the man. He led her away among the trees. They continued for some time in silence until she began to be alarmed; it was very dark among the trees, so that she could not tell in what direction they were really moving, yet she had a feeling that she was being led altogether away from where she conceived the garden was; moreover, the sound of the pipes was dying away behind them. She stopped.

'Where are we going?' she demanded.

'We'll be there in a blink, my dearie,' said the man.

His familiarity alarmed her. 'Who are you that speak to me like that?' she demanded. 'Take me back. I insist. You are leading me wrong.'

'Now, hinny, dinna be frightened,' said the man, laying a controlling hand on her.

At that she took violent alarm. She struck his hand away, and turned to flee; but he laid hold of her again, and whistled 'loud and shrill.' In a second or two, another man appeared, also in Highland dress. Margaret set herself to scream; but the first man clapped his hand on her mouth, while the second seized her arms.

'Nane o' that, my leddy!' said the first. 'Just ye gang with us, and there's naething'll harm ye. But ye mustna skelloch.' She tried to scream again—when he insisted on gagging her with a cork and her own handkerchief—

which he drew from her pocket—while the second bound her hands with a scarf. 'It will be a pity, my leddy,' said the first man, 'if we should ha'e to carry ye. Will ye gang, or will ye no gang, on your ain feet? Gang ye must. We ha'e our commands, and we must obey them. And it will be a pity for a fine bonny young leddy to be carried by twa orra men. As sure as death, there's nae wrang will come to ye; so now, like a braw young leddy, step it out yourself.'

Resistance Margaret saw was useless; she was hot, ashamed, and indignant; but she sensibly submitted to walk between the two men, rather than be carried by them. They had gone but a little way when they came upon another man, not in Highland dress, who held a pony by the bridle. The pony was furnished with a side-saddle, into which it was signified to Margaret that she must mount. She mounted; and the three led her away through the wood till they came out upon the mountain side and saw the lights of the castle below them. On they marched by difficult mountain paths, and still on, till the castle was left far behind, and then her captors were considerate enough to remove the gag from Margaret's mouth.

Meanwhile, in the courtyard and on the grass, the pipers piped and the dancers danced and 'hooched,' and the spectators looked on with interest and enthusiasm, especially the German spectators. The Herr Cancellarius exclaimed to a neighbour: 'But the Scottish "hooch!" is just the German "hoch!" That is so!' and he declared his intention of causing a monograph to be written on the subject on his return to Pumpernickel. Colonel Herries-Hay looked on with the critical eye of one accustomed both to military and Highland pageants. At intervals he glanced round with a half-absent eye for Margaret. At length he said to his wife: 'Where is Margaret?'

'Where is Margaret?' echoed Mrs Herries-Hay, gazing round her without any alarm. 'Isn't she here?—Oh, well, I daresay she's trying to find a better point of view than ours. Don't worry. Perhaps she's with the Prince. I saw him over there a few minutes ago with a lady.'

'With the Prince!' The Colonel did not like the suggestion, though in common civility he could not resent it. And the pipers piped, and the dancers danced, and the Colonel looked on, but with a wandering eye that sought the figure of his daughter or of the Prince.

Presently the Prince turned up at his elbow.

'You will stay for supper with my friends, will you not, Colonel?' asked the Prince, while his eye seemed to seek something beyond the Colonel.

'I hope your Royal Highness will excuse us for going away before supper, but we have a long way to drive.—It may seem a foolish question, sir,' continued the Colonel, 'but—have you seen my daughter Margaret? We must be going soon, and I have missed her for some time.'

'No,' answered the Prince; 'I have not seen her since the moment after you came.—But I

will go and find her,' he added briskly, and went off, with the Colonel's request not 'to trouble' sounding in his ears.

The Colonel watched the Prince working steadily round the crowd, and then he himself started off to work round in the opposite direction. In a little while they met.

'Have you seen her, sir?' asked the Colonel.

'No,' answered the Prince; 'I have not. It is strange—is it not? But she must be all right.' Their eyes met, and they considered each other a moment. 'I wish to talk with you, Colonel,' said the Prince, 'to-morrow or the next day, and to bring the Herr Cancellarius with me.'

The Colonel heedlessly murmured that he would be pleased to see the Prince and any of his friends; but he was thinking anxiously of his daughter: where could she have gone?

'You will forgive me, sir, but I cannot help wondering what has become of my daughter. She cannot have gone home: the distance is too great to walk—and at night. But may she not have wandered into the wood and lost her way?

'She may, Colonel—certainly she may,' said the Prince. 'I will at once send some men with torches to see.'

'And I will go with them, sir,' said the Colonel.

By that time the piping and the dancing were almost at an end; and the Prince, after directing some of the bearers of torches to attend Colonel Herries-Hay, went to receive his supper-guests. Now, it so fell out—whether by chance or by design, I will not suggest—that the Herr Cancellarius was by when the Colonel told the torch-bearers what he desired them to do. Hearing the Colonel's words, the Herr Cancellarius came forward and addressed him. 'Perhaps, Herr Colonel,' said the Herr Cancellarius, 'the young lady has wandered into the forest and has been carried off by banditti!'

'Carried off by banditti?' exclaimed the Colonel. 'What banditti? There are no banditti, sir, in Scotland! You must be thinking you are in the mountains of Italy or of Greece!'

'But you have your Highland clans, Herr Colonel—your caterans, your robbers! They are here to-night; they are everywhere. To-night they are good friends, but they are not always. That is so, eh?'

'You are strangely mistaken, Herr Cancellarius,' said the Colonel, in wonder and suspicion. 'The Highland clans—such as are left of them—are not robbers or caterans. The clansmen you have seen to-night are decent farmers and work-people. I venture to say they have never robbed or fought with weapons in their lives.—Eh, what say ye?' he appealed to the torch-bearers, who protested 'No, no!' and laughed prodigiously when they had fully understood the suggestion of the German gentleman.

'But,' said the amazed and perplexed Herr Cancellarius, 'have you not your Rob Roy and his people and the Dougal Creature and all that kind of men in your Highlands? Have you not?'

'I perceive,' said the Colonel, compelled to laughter, 'that you have been reading Sir Walter Scott, Herr Cancellarius, and that you have forgotten—or have not known—that even when Sir Walter wrote—and that's more than sixty years since—the state of the Highlands which he set down had ceased to exist.'

'Is that so?' exclaimed the Herr Cancellarius.

'Certainly, that is so,' replied the Colonel.

'And now,' said the Herr Cancellarius, in a tone of lamentation, 'there is no romantic thing in your Highlands?—no robbers, no Rob Roys? Hein?'

'No more Rob Roys now in the Highlands,' answered the Colonel, 'than there are snakes in Iceland.'

'Then I was wrong!' dolorously exclaimed the Herr Cancellarius.

By that time they were moving with their torches about the wood, starting from the point where Margaret had stood with her parents, and the Herr Cancellarius followed, murmuring, 'Yes, I was wrong!' The torch-bearers spread without hesitation about the wood, with the features and tracks of which they were perfectly familiar. Presently one of the foremost called out, and the Colonel, followed by the Herr Cancellarius, hurried up to him. 'Here is a letter, Kornel,' said the man, 'that I found on the ground. And ye can see there has been a hantle o' scuffling feet hereabout.'

'Let me see,' said the Colonel, taking the letter.

He looked at it: it was addressed to Miss Herries-Hay! (It must have been drawn from Margaret's pocket with her handkerchief when her captors bound her.) He took the letter from the envelope and read it: it was the anonymous note that we know.

'No signature!' exclaimed the Colonel. 'This is a scoundrelly trap!—This is sufficient explanation. We need not search any more, my friends. Thank you for your assistance.—And now, sir,' said he, turning to the Herr Cancellarius, who had remained at his elbow throughout, 'I shall be obliged if you will conduct me to your master and secure me a private interview with him.'

It was a strange scene that the tall fir-trees of the wood looked down upon—the gray and lean old Colonel, pale and trembling with fury, which he was politely trying to keep down. Opposite him, the white-headed, round-bodied Cancellarius, clearly much disturbed, but striving to assert his own dignity and the royalty of his master; and the torch-bearers around, bound by overwhelming curiosity, and holding high their lights to see the combative pair clearly.

'His Royal Highness, Herr Colonel,' said the Cancellarius, 'will not be able to grant a private interview to-night. He is now engaged with his guests, and thereafter he will retire to his private apartments.'

'His Royal Highness must see me alone at once!' exclaimed the Colonel.

'"Must," Herr Colonel,' said the Cancellarius, 'is not a word you should permit yourself to use.'

'Do not presume, sir,' exclaimed the furious Colonel, 'to lecture and bully me! I am not

a subject of your absurd kingdom of Pumpernickel! I am a Scotsman, and a British subject, and I would have an explanation, and—reparation to-night, were the Prince of Pumpernickel a Prince of the Blood Royal of England!—So lead on, sir, or I will myself bring your Prince out from his supper party!

The Herr Cancellarius, therefore, made a little stiff bow, and led on out of the wood, back to the castle.

In a few minutes the angry Colonel stood face to face with His Royal Highness in the library. The Prince looked surprised, but completely alert.

'You demand a private interview with me at once, Herr Colonel?' said the Prince.

'Alone, your Royal Highness,' said the Colonel, glancing at the Cancellarius.

'Leave us, Herr Cancellarius,' said the Prince. The Cancellarius went out, 'Now, Colonel?'

The Colonel stated briefly how they had begun to search for his daughter, and had found a letter addressed to her lying on the ground.

'Will your Royal Highness look at the letter?' The Colonel handed it to him.

The Prince glanced at it, started, frowned, and read its few words through. 'Well, Colonel, I have read it,' said the Prince.

'You are a young man, your Royal Highness,' said the Colonel, 'of such lofty station that few people would be inclined to apply to your conduct the ordinary standard of behaviour. But, sir, I am an old man, who have seen a great many young men, and I must say, sir, I had expected different conduct from you; moreover, I am her father. What have you done with my daughter? Where is she?'

'It may seem presumption in a young man, Colonel,' said the Prince; 'but permit me to say you prove yourself a gentleman *sans peur et sans reproche*, as I was sure you were. At first, Colonel, I will confess I have thought different thoughts from those I think now. And this letter—well, why should he not pay for his own folly?' That was mostly as Greek to the Colonel; but when the Prince went to the door and called 'Herr Cancellarius,' the Colonel was bewildered. The Herr Cancellarius entered, and the Prince at once addressed him volubly in German, which the astonished Colonel toiled to follow. This is how the Colonel hurriedly translated to himself. 'Herr Cancellarius,' said the Prince, 'what is this you do? This—holding out the letter—is your foolish and absurd handwriting! Why do you interfere thus in my affair? You are a swine, a Jew, a creature entirely without sense of fitness! What have you contrived, and where have you put the young lady?'

There followed quick question and answer—sharp as the 'tention!' 'shoulder arms!' of the parade ground—which the Colonel's diplomatic knowledge of German did not permit him to follow with understanding. At length the Prince turned to him and explained.

'The Herr Cancellarius,' said the Prince, 'confesses himself the person responsible for the disappearance of your daughter! Not that he has abducted her for himself, but that he meant to abduct her from me; and he hopes

on that ground to be forgiven!—Permit me to explain, Colonel. I love your daughter, and I desire to marry her: so much as that it was necessary for me to say, two days ago, to the Herr Cancellarius, who represents with me my father the king, so that the Herr Cancellarius might communicate with my father the king. But the Herr Cancellarius took upon himself to relieve me of the young lady your daughter. He wrote this letter, and arranged that she should be carried off! But why did he think that any one should believe she was carried off? Ha, ha! you must laugh with me, Colonel, and forgive him!—The Herr Cancellarius, in his old age, had read Walter Scott, and he believed there were Rob Roys in Scotland to-day, and that Rob Roy and no one else would be blamed when your daughter disappeared! He thought every one would say: "Rob Roy! Rob Roy has carried her off into his mountain fastness!"'

'Where is my daughter, then?' asked the Colonel, who was not yet prepared to laugh.

The Prince turned to the Herr Cancellarius and asked a question, and then turned again to the Colonel with a reply. 'The Herr Cancellarius declares that no harm has happened to her; but he is foolish to the last, for he does not know the precise place beyond the mountains to which she has been taken by the men he engaged to do his work! But he shall discover it!'

The Prince turned and uttered an order; and the Herr Cancellarius with a humble bow went out.

A GREAT RAILWAY'S JUBILEE.

THE 'One Hundredth Half-yearly General Meeting' of the Midland Railway Company was held at Derby in February this year; but the actual date of the Jubilee of the great corporation is a little later, for it was on the 10th of May 1844 that the Midland Railway was formed by the amalgamation of the Midland Counties, the North Midland, and the Birmingham and Derby systems of lines. And the condition, extent of, and work done by the Midland Railway now is a striking proof alike of the clear views of its early promoters, and of the vast growth of the railway interest in the half-century. It is well known that the first beginnings of what is now the Midland Railway were in the formation by 'a few enterprising coalowners' of a modest little line. It was in 1832 that the Leicester and Swannington Railway was opened, and the opening brought down the price of coal in Leicester. The colliery proprietors of Nottinghamshire district felt it needful to take steps to protect their own industries, and meeting at the 'Sun Inn' at Eastwood in August of the year just named, they decided to construct a railway from their own coalfields to Leicester; and thus began the Midland Counties system. The North Midland, and the Birmingham and Derby, were creations of George Stephenson; and between the three lines a keen competition began, ending in the amalgamation we have spoken of, and justifying Robert Stephenson's axiom, 'where combination is possible, competition is impossible.'

After the formation of the Midland Railway, a series of amalgamations enlarged its boundaries rapidly. The Birmingham and Gloucester, the Bristol and Gloucester, the Leeds and Bradford, and other railways, were successively taken in by the Midland; but it is better known perhaps by the branches it has constructed than by those it has purchased. It felt the need for an entrance of its own into the metropolis, and formed a line from Bedford through St Albans to St Pancras; it made a branch from Chesterfield to Masborough; and by the expenditure of some four millions, it sent out a line of seventy miles long, the Settle and Carlisle branch, which gave it, by its ally, the Glasgow and South-western, a direct access into Scotland. Over the half-century since the formation of the Midland Railway, the policy of extension has been enterprisingly followed, and now the line of this great company stretches from London and Bournemouth to Carlisle; and from Cambridge to Morecambe; and from Swinton to Swansea. Nor is its line complete. This year it will open for passenger traffic a costly branch that, starting from Dore to the south of Sheffield, pierces the Peak of Derbyshire, and reaching Chinley, will not only serve to open out a new scenic country, but will greatly expedite the traffic to Manchester from the south and south-east (see *Chambers's Journal*, June 4, 1892).

The Midland Railway is a wonderful out-growth. The little line of 1844 had 181½ miles of permanent way; the latest official Report states that the miles of railway now constructed and owned by it are 1330; and in addition there are 595 miles of which it is the joint owner with other railway companies. Over its own and other railways its engines now run for 1998 miles. Its capital is enormous: the total authorised by Parliament is £101,594,266; and though a small part of this sum is a nominal addition to enable stocks to be reduced to one of common dividend, yet it must not be forgotten that much of the stock stands at so high a premium that its value is far above the nominal. The last half-year was one in which the Midland lost £708,000 of traffic through the deplorable strike in its district; but even then its revenue for the six months was the large sum of £4,190,462. In another way, the extent of the area and of the duty done, and the possessions of this great railway, may be indicated by the statement that it is compelled to pay close upon seven hundred pounds for each day for 'rates and taxes.' It needs 2217 locomotive engines, 4653 carriages, and 112,712 wagons and trucks to do its work on the line; there are the auxiliaries of 4339 horses and 4230 drays and carts; and for the last six months of 1893 it paid an average of £42,000 monthly for the coal and coke it needed for locomotive power. And it may be said in concluding this statistical statement that, apart from season-ticket holders, the Midland Railway carries each month about 105,000 first-class passengers, and 3,337,000 third-class passengers. The naming of two classes only is a reminder of the fact that it is to the initiative of the Midland Railway that we owe the addition of

third-class carriages to all trains; and that a later date witnessed on it the commencement of the abolition of second-class passenger traffic.

It would be vain to attempt to give an idea even of the variety of the districts and the industries that the Midland Railway serves. The 'Official Guide' to the railway points out that it serves many of the health-resorts of England, cathedral cities, ruined abbeys, baronial halls of the past and present; the homes of Bunyan, Cowper, Byron, Izaak Walton, the Brontës, George Eliot, and a score of others who gave literary interest to the reality of the life of the line. It is the greatest of our railway carriers of coal—and probably of beer also. Distinctive industries, such as the straw-plait manufacture of Luton, the sugar-refineries of Bristol, the chocolate productions of Birmingham, the cutlery of Sheffield, the porcelain of the Potteries—all mingle on its line with the cotton of Lancashire, the woollens from Yorkshire, the shoes from Northampton and Leeds, and the lines from Barnsley. Its own needs cause it to become a creator of industries; and thus its vast works for locomotive, carriage, and wagon building are marvellous in extent and in industry, whilst no attentive observer can pass through the great stations of the Midland without noticing how it has become the parent of trades. The line of which Ellis, Thompson, and Paget have been chairmen, and Allport, Noble, and Turner general managers, is widely different from the little line of fifty years ago. Its operations and aid have permitted the up-growth in many parts of the country of vast industries; have drawn together great populations; and may be literally said to have changed the physical face of a large part of England, so that the jubilee of its history would have been well worth celebrating.

MISS AGATHA.

NOTHING could have been trimmer than the garden of Bramble Cottage, except, possibly, the two old ladies who tended it. The house lay well back from the high-road, and was almost surrounded by orchards, so that you came on it quite unexpectedly. It had green lawns about it and pleasantly shaded walks, and in the south corner a little colony of beehives. Hardly any sound of the outside world reached the place, and the postman was the centre of excitement; even he was an unofficial-looking person, who carried a heavy stick, and generally had a dog at his heels.

It was a pleasant, sunny afternoon in early autumn, and a letter had just been left at Bramble Cottage, addressed, in a very pretty hand, to Miss Agatha Musgrave. She sat down by an open window to read it, with Miss Deborah opposite her. The difference in age between the sisters could not have been great; but the advantage lay with Miss Agatha, who carried herself with an air of greater authority than the other, and took the lead in all matters

of propriety and household management. They were both comely ladies, with kindly eyes and delicate well-bred faces, that had a sort of second bloom upon them. Miss Agatha's eyes were dark, and had not lost the power of flashing with a very pretty, dangerous light; Miss Deborah's were blue, and gleamed with the pleasantest simplicity and tenderness. As yet, there was no touch of gray in the hair of either.

Miss Agatha opened her letter carefully and spread it out upon her lap. Miss Deborah laid down her needlework and watched her complacently. The laden bees were coming home, and went past the window with a pleasant hum.

'Well,' said Miss Deborah, 'what has Lucy got to say to-day?'

'Give me time to read the letter first, sister. Don't hurry me!' Miss Agatha read it through twice; at the end of the second perusal she handed it, with a frown, to Miss Deborah. 'There is a good deal too much about Captain Danby,' she said. 'It begins and ends with Captain Danby. I don't like it at all.'

Miss Deborah did not appear in the least disturbed. She handed back the letter with a smile. 'Well,' she said, 'I believe Captain Danby to be a very pleasant young man. His father, you know, was a brave soldier, and a most intimate friend of ours many years ago.'

'I'm afraid you don't quite realise the situation, Deborah,' said Miss Agatha. 'When young people are thrown together as these two appear to have been, the very worst consequences may be apprehended, and there is no denying that Lucy is a most attractive child. The only good thing about it is that she seems quite candid, and does not try to conceal her liking for him.'

Miss Deborah took up her needlework again and bent over it. She was secretly pleased by the letter. She remembered this Captain Danby when he was a boy, and what a brave, sturdy little chap he had been. Indeed, she had been fully aware that he was to be one of the guests at the country house where Lucy had been staying. Perhaps she felt a little penitent that she had not acquainted her sister with the fact.

'There can be no harm done,' she said, after a pause; 'Lucy is very young.'

'That is precisely the reason why harm should have been done,' said Miss Agatha. 'She has no knowledge of the world, and may have grown to—to love this man unconsciously.'

'And would it be so very terrible if she had?' asked Miss Deborah with a boldness that made her blush.

'My dear Deborah!' said Miss Agatha sternly, 'you have had no experience in such matters.' Miss Deborah bowed her head a little lower over her work, but said nothing. 'I have had some insight into the heartlessness of men. I do not wish to speak about myself, but I can never forget my own trouble.'

Miss Deborah put down her work once more and went and stood by her sister's side, resting one delicate little hand upon her shoulder. 'My dear,' she said, 'we will not speak of that. But I am afraid we cannot always hope to keep Lucy with us.'

'Nor would I wish to do so,' said Miss Agatha, softened. She had had a very great disappointment in her early life. She had loved once, wholly and unreservedly; and then her lover had left her suddenly, without having declared himself, and leaving no message behind. She heard of his existence occasionally from distant parts of the country, but never a word addressed to herself. This had not soured her; she was cast in too fine a mould for that; but though the wound was healed, it had left a general theoretical mistrust of mankind behind, that made itself apparent in her judgment of male sentiment.

'She will be coming back in three days' time,' said Miss Deborah. 'Do not let us spoil the poor child's pleasure by shortening the visit.'

'I cannot help thinking it would be wiser to send for her at once!'

'Three days can make no difference,' pleaded Miss Deborah.

'Well,' said Miss Agatha, 'have your own way. But remember, that you will be responsible for any unpleasant consequences that may follow.'

Miss Deborah smilingly undertook the responsibility, and it was decided that Lucy should not be recalled.

When she came back, the old ladies were in the garden, waiting to welcome her. They were both very much excited, and Miss Deborah was in an almost pitiful flutter of expectancy. She felt sure, as the girl ran towards them with a flushed and happy face and outstretched hands, that there was something in her eyes that had not been there before. But neither of them said a word about the subject which had been discussed between them until the evening, when they were all sitting in the parlour together, with the window open to the lawn. Lucy was in a low chair between them, her hands clasped behind her head. She was a beautiful girl, with dark eyes like Miss Agatha's, and a wonderful crown of brown hair that held the sunlight in it. She looked straight before her into the garden, down a path flanked on either side by standard roses. Every now and then she tapped with her foot upon the floor, as though beating time to a tune.

'You are not sorry to be back, dear?' said Miss Agatha, frowning across at her sister.

'N-no,' said Lucy; 'I am not sorry. Of course I enjoyed myself very much; but Bramble Cottage is the dearest place in the world.'

Miss Agatha looked relieved; Miss Deborah went on quietly with her work. She was waiting for something more.

'They were all nice people, I suppose?' queried Miss Agatha, trying to catch her sister's eye, and failing utterly in the attempt.

'Oh yes,' said the girl, 'delightful! Didn't I tell you all about them in my letters?'

'You told us a great deal about one of them,' said Miss Agatha; 'I think his name was Captain Danby.'

Lucy started and blushed. That was exactly what Miss Deborah had been waiting for; she was quite sure now. She looked at the girl with what was intended for encouragement;

but her glance quailed under the rebuke of Miss Agatha's frown.

'Is he a very agreeable sort of person?' asked Miss Agatha.

Lucy looked first at her and then at Miss Deborah; there was a smile of approval on the younger lady's face that was unmistakable. She took Miss Deborah's hand, and was rewarded by a caressing pressure of the fingers.

'Very,' said Lucy, after this little pause.

'He is a son of Colonel Danby's, is he not?' continued Miss Agatha.

'Yes. He was in the Egyptian war. He distinguished himself very much. He is a V.C. I saw it!'

'Oh!' said Miss Agatha. 'I suppose he told you all about himself?'

'He never told me a word: I heard it all from other people. He showed me his Victoria Cross; but I asked him to let me see it!'

'My dear child!' ejaculated Miss Agatha.

Miss Deborah squeezed Lucy's hand again, and then patted it gently. She felt that it must be coming now—and so it was.

'Aunt Agatha—Aunt Deborah,' said the girl, 'I want to tell you something.'

Miss Agatha sat up very straight in her chair and said nothing. Miss Deborah nodded her head with a smile.

'Captain Danby and I saw a great deal of each other. I—I liked him very much from the first time I met him. He—he has asked me to marry him!'

'Good gracious, child!' cried Miss Agatha. She could not have been more surprised by a proposal addressed to herself. To have her very worst fears put into a single sentence like this was overpowering. It took her some time to recover; then she turned herself sternly to her sister.

'I was sure something dreadful of this kind would happen, Deborah.'

'I don't see anything very dreadful in it!' said Miss Deborah, keeping tight hold of Lucy's hand, as much for her own support now as the girl's.

'Of course you refused him?' said Miss Agatha, ignoring her sister's remark.

'No; I didn't,' said Lucy, 'because, you see, I love him. I told him that I must first get your consent.'

'But you are only eighteen, child! How can you possibly know your own mind at that age?'

The girl blushed at this, and Miss Deborah felt her hand tremble. She hastened to interpose.

'I think we must not press Lucy too closely on that point,' she said. 'She must consult her own feelings in the matter.'

'He is coming to see you next week,' said Lucy; 'and oh, Aunt Agatha, I do hope you will be kind to him, and—judge him fairly.'

'Coming here!' cried Miss Agatha.

'I am sure we shall be very pleased to see him,' said Miss Deborah.

This was too much for Miss Agatha. 'Your Aunt Deborah,' she said severely to Lucy, rising, 'is most unpractical. I will speak to you *alone* to-morrow morning about this. In the meantime, my dear, don't trouble yourself about it; you may be sure I shall do what

seems best for your happiness.' And although this was said very judicially, she kissed the girl with the utmost affection, and went upstairs with a warm glow at her heart and an unusual moisture in her eyes.

'Do you think,' said Lucy, putting her arms round Miss Deborah's neck, 'that Aunt Agatha is really angry with me?'

'She is more angry with me than with you,' said Miss Deborah, stroking the girl's hair. 'I am sure when she sees Captain Danby it will all come right. She has the kindest heart in the world, and wishes, above everything, to see you happy. And you know, dear, that I am on your side.'

'I knew you would be,' said Lucy, kissing her.

It happened, however, that when Captain Danby came, he found the opposition much less than he had expected; and this is how it came about.

Two or three days later, Miss Agatha was in the garden alone. Miss Deborah and Lucy were out together, and the elder sister was busy about her rose-bushes. She had a wide-brimmed straw hat on her head, and her hands were protected by brown leather gauntlets. The day was warm, and she worked slowly, pausing often to watch the sunlight striking through upon the apples in the surrounding orchards. Overhead, tiny fleets of white cloud were being piloted across the blue by a light breeze. Presently she heard the gate click. She looked up with some surprise, wondering who her visitor could be. She saw a tall, grave-looking man, with a heavy gray moustache and a slight stoop, approaching the house. At first, she regarded him with some curiosity; and then she suddenly let her pruning scissors fall with a clatter to the ground. 'It's John Temple!' she said with a gasp.

He looked up and saw her. For a moment he stood quite still. Appearing to recover himself, he approached her bareheaded, bowing as he came.

Miss Agatha did not move a step to meet him; she was too utterly astonished to stir; and, more than that, there began a strange fluttering at her heart, that she vainly strove to conquer.

'You remember me?' he said, holding out his hand.

She took it, and looked him full in the eyes. She had expected that he would show some sign of embarrassment; but he returned her gaze without a tremor of the eyelid. What little change had come to him in all that time! It was the same earnest, almost appealing, look that she had known so well many years before.

'Yes,' she said, 'I remember you.'

'I happened, quite by accident, to be in this part of the country, and I could not deny myself the pleasure of seeing you once more.'

'It was very good of you,' she said, and there was not even a touch of scorn in her voice. The little fire of resentment that she had hoarded for so long against him burnt very low in his immediate presence; indeed, it seemed inclined to die out altogether. She had believed, all these years, that he had treated her with unpardonable heartlessness; and yet,

when he stood before her, the belief grew very dim and faint.

She invited him to go indoors; the sun was hot, and possibly a glass of wine might refresh him. He accepted; and as they walked towards the house, he offered her the conduct of his arm. This she declined, immediately repenting, however, when he bowed, drawing his lips tightly together. She set a decanter and glasses before him with her own hands, but he made no move towards them. He sat for some time with bowed head, she watching him. It was the very chair which he had so often occupied thirty years before, and the recollection returned so sharply upon Miss Agatha that she could have cried out. Presently he looked up, and, filling a glass with a hand that clearly trembled, raised it to his lips, setting it down again, however, almost untasted. 'May I,' he said, 'ask you a question about something that happened a long time ago?'

Miss Agatha's head swam. The room and the strangely familiar figure in it she saw through an unreal mist. Her own voice sounded very distant as she answered: 'You may ask, but I cannot promise to answer you.' 'Well,' he said, 'I could not hope for more. Why did you not answer my last letter? It seemed to me then that it was unkind in you not to give me any reply at all.'

This was not the question which she had expected. All at once she began to see clearly again, but the sense of unreality remained. The fluttering at her heart grew worse, and she leant heavily with both hands upon the arms of her chair. 'What letter?' she asked. 'To the last one I received from you, I did reply.'

John Temple started and looked at her. His face suddenly grew a little pale. 'Was it,' he said, 'a letter of any importance?'

'Of no more importance,' she answered, 'than many letters I had received from you.'

He rose and paced the room. Once or twice he paused and tried to speak, but could not—his lips trembled and his breath came hurriedly. After some minutes, by a great effort he mastered himself. 'I am afraid,' he said, 'there has been a terrible mistake. Is the apple tree still standing where we used to hide notes to each other in the old days?' He blushed as he said this, in spite of his gray moustache. Miss Agatha blushed too.

'Yes,' she said.

'May I go and see it?' he asked. 'Thirty years ago—it was a warm summer night, and all the lights in this house were out—I placed a note, addressed to you, in the hollow of the old tree. I never had any reply. From your silence, I concluded that I had been mistaken after all. I went away. I was too proud in those days again to offer what I thought had once been scorned. To-day, I come back, and find that my foolish pride may have cost more—more than I dare to think of.'

Miss Agatha rose; she felt such pity for herself and him that tears were in her eyes. 'Let us go and look,' she said.

As they crossed the garden to the tree which had played so large a part in both their lives, she did not refuse the offer of his

arm, but leant upon it heavily. The green lawns about them lay unshadowed in the hot sunlight. The wind had fallen almost dead, and not a bird sang. Neither of them spoke until the familiar spot was reached. It was a very old apple tree, covered with lichen, and almost fruitless, with a hole on the garden side large enough for the insertion of a hand. John Temple explored the space with eager fingers.

'The whole trunk is hollow now,' he said. 'I do not think it used to be so. It is possible, however, that it may have commenced to go even then. The night was dark, and I could not see to place the letter carefully.' He turned to Miss Agatha. 'I believe,' he said, 'that this tree holds my secret still. May I search further?'

'Yes,' she answered.

He struck the tree near the base with his foot. The wood crumbled and the branches above quivered. He went down upon his knees and broke away the rotten bark with his fingers. In a few minutes there was a hole large enough to admit his hand. Miss Agatha turned away; his face moved her too strongly. When she looked again, he was on his feet, with a piece of folded paper in his hand.

'Here it is,' he said, holding it out to her—'it is yours. If you will read it now, it may make things clearer to you.'

She took it. The paper was stained and soiled with dirt and damp, but upon the cover she could still read her name. She opened it, and saw the words that had been intended for her eyes so long ago. In it, the man before her asked her to be his wife. He loved her—that was all. She had lived for thirty years believing him untrue, and all that time in her own garden had been the record of his true and honourable love.

The memory of her own suffering did not strike her then; her only thought was to do him justice, though so late. But he was at her side before she had time to frame a word.

'If it is not too late,' he said, 'read that letter as though the ink were not yet dry. To-day it is all as true as it was then. I have been faithful to you all these years. I have, if I may say so, grown gray in your service. Give me the reward of faithfulness.'

'My dear John,' she said, holding out her hand, and with tears running down her face—'my dear John, if you still wish it, I have not a word to say. I have loved you always.'

He kissed her gently, with a delicacy and love that made her heart go out to him in one low cry. The thirty years of waiting were blotted out.

When Lucy came in, Miss Agatha sought her in her own room and begged for her forgiveness. 'My dear,' she said, 'you shall marry any man you love. If it is Captain Danby, you shall marry him. I have to-day learnt the best lesson of my life.' And then followed a sudden burst of confidence that left Lucy glowing with unexpected happiness.

Thus it was that all opposition was suddenly withdrawn; and of the three ladies in Bramble Cottage, two were married on one day. Miss

Deborah alone remained; but she was quite content in the happiness of the other two. Perhaps she had strong reasons for remaining single, but if she had, she never told them—not even to Miss Agatha.

A NEW MATERIAL FOR BARRELS.

THE disadvantages inherent to the construction of barrels from wood have long been admitted, for the evaporation and absorption of such material, as well as its liability to leak, are well known; it is not, therefore, surprising that many efforts—as the records of the Patent Office abundantly testify—have been made from time to time to find some suitable substitute for the manufacture of an article so universally in demand. Hitherto, such attempts have been confined to the production of iron drums—namely, of vessels perfectly cylindrical in shape and lacking the customary bilge. These drums proved too heavy for practical purposes, and the absence of the bilge proved a serious drawback, for it rendered them difficult to handle and roll, and generally militated in no small degree against their introduction. An effort was subsequently made to mitigate the disadvantages due to loss of bilge by the introduction of external hoops specially adapted to facilitate the rolling and transport of the casks; these, however, only added to the weight without increasing the internal capacity, and generally failed to improve matters.

At length, however, the introduction of mild steel placed at the disposal of the barrel manufacturers a material which combined all the valuable qualities of iron with greater strength; or which, in other words, would yield equal strength for considerably less weight of metal. The difficulty, however, was not yet solved, for although steel would bend in such manner as to form the much-desired bilge, as opposed to iron, which could not stand such curvature without serious risk of failure, machinery had to be invented which would turn out steel barrels not only of the highest workmanship, but at such a cost and in such numbers that they would hold their own in the market. This has at length been accomplished, and the steel-barrel manufacture now ranks as one of the industries of the country.

Steel can now be produced of such excellent quality that the barrels made from sheets of it only one-sixteenth to one-quarter of an inch in thickness stand every strain and rough usage possible. The remarkable lightness arising from the employment of such thin yet strong material needs no further comment. The body of each cask being rolled from a sheet of steel, has one longitudinal seam, which is welded together by a special electrical process, which closes the joint in a manner at once absolutely sound and tight. The ends are stamped out of sheet steel in the required circular form, each having a circular flange or turned-up edge to form connection with the body of the barrel already described. The flanged ends are then fitted into the barrel body, and are securely jammed between an inside and an outside steel hoop, thus making

four thicknesses of metal to form the 'chimb' or end-edge. These being all fused together electrically, form one solid steel 'chimb,' which cannot possibly move or become loose.

A special feature in this process is the formation of the bilge from cold steel—namely, the metal does not require to be heated ere being rolled and stamped to the shape of the body of a cask, and consequently, any risk of one portion of the sheet becoming thinner and weaker than another is entirely obviated. On completion, the barrels are tested by hydraulic pressure to forty pounds on the square inch, so as to ensure an absolutely sound job ere they are permitted to leave the factory. Both bungs and bung rings are similarly stamped out of steel, the ring for the central bung being welded on the inside of the barrel, to avoid any outside projection.

Many incidental advantages accrue in the adoption of the new steel barrels; thus, the gauging and taring, when once properly done, remain correct, and do not require readjustment. Wood-barrels, on the other hand, gradually acquire weight through absorption and impregnation, and their capacity, moreover, changes with every repetition of the process of rehooping.

In regard to the rates charged for freight and insurance, steel barrels should effect considerable alterations; for at present, ship-owners regard many light volatile oils, spirits, acids, chemicals, &c., as sources of risk when stored in wood-casks, and charge correspondingly for their carriage, whilst many lines of steamers absolutely refuse to carry them.

In cases, moreover, where influences of climate and the ravages of rats, mice, and insects have to be specially guarded against, steel barrels undoubtedly will command a large business.

It is indeed difficult to overrate the many useful purposes to which a barrel at once cheap, strong, and durable can be applied, when constructed of impervious and practically indestructible steel. But enough has been said to demonstrate that the new invention now occupying our attention has all the elements in it of great success, and of undoubtedly conferring considerable benefit on all classes of the community.

M I D - M A Y.

A WISH.

In long, lush grass the deep-hued bluebells blow :
Above, the foliage—Summer's glorious green
Chastened by Spring's last touches; and between
The tremulous network glimpses of the snow
Of little wandering cloudlets, sailing slow
Across the pure cerulean : silver sheen
Of hawthorn all around : the air serene
Suddenly throbs to a lark's wild music's flow.
Some lives are Aprils with a few bright days,
A few fair flowers by weary searchings found,
And dark clouds threatening ere the sunny rays
Can kiss the leaves, or glint upon the ground.
But be thy joys unsought, thy life like May's
Deep lavish woods full of sweet sight and sound.

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